

## NEW YORK PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Meeting of November 10, 1954, at The New York Academy of Medicine

*Introductory Remarks on the Presentation of the Twenty-First  
Middleton Goldsmith Lecture by Dr. Eugene L. Opie*

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IN the golden age of Athens, there were two schools of philosophy, the Academy of Plato and the Peripatetic School of Aristotle. The former school was most interested in a search for the Ideal Life, the latter for what passed for Science down through the centuries. Is it any wonder that the organization founded in 1847 (I quote from Dr. Van Ingen<sup>1</sup>) to combat the "rampancy of quackery" and to draw a line "between science and roguery" was called The New York Academy of Medicine? The New York Pathological Society had been founded three years before the Academy and there is no evidence as to whether the founders of the Academy considered the founders of the New York Pathological Society scientists or rogues. In any event, we are committed to the Peripatetic School for this evening, and are following Drs. Middleton Goldsmith and Eugene L. Opie in their journeyings from place to place and from achievement to achievement.

But first we must establish our point of departure, New York City, at the time of the formation of the New York Pathological Society in 1844. Dr. Middleton Goldsmith lived on Park Place then a street one block in length running from "The Park," on which the City Hall had been built thirty years previously, westward to "The College," as it was called on early maps. This is now, of course, Columbia University. It would have been only a short walk up Broadway to "The Hospital" at Pearl Street, founded about seventy years before, and now The New York Hospital. A slightly longer walk would have been necessary to get to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Medical Department of

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Columbia College, at Crosby Street, near Prince. It must have been a real expedition, though, to The New Almshouse and Hospital, thirty years of age at this time, at the present site of Bellevue Hospital. The big event of the epoch was the introduction of Croton water two years previously.

This decade in New York was by no means a golden age of medical achievement. For instance, records of "The Hospital" contain much more satisfactory autopsy protocols in the second than in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century. And to consider 1844 in its place in medical chronology: Johannes Müller had first used a microscope only six years previously, while Oliver Wendell Holmes' classic article on the contagiousness of puerperal fever had been published the year before. To look into the future, Louis Pasteur's first communication and Rudolph Virchow's "Cellular Pathologie" were to be published respectively four and fourteen years after 1844.

There were three founders of our Society.

One, Lewis A. Sayre, at whose office on Broadway and Spring Street the Society was founded, writes<sup>2</sup> that when he graduated in 1842, "pathology was taught at best in a very fragmentary way, the occasion being a stray specimen that fell into the hands of a professor; as a regular means of instruction it was not heard of in any institution in the country."

A second founder of the Society was Dr. John C. Peters, who had just returned from Europe as a pupil of Rokitsansky, then in his late thirties, and Hasse. Dr. Peters and Dr. Middleton Goldsmith were engaged more particularly in the study of pathology and worked together especially in the examination of coroner's cases under Dr. E. G. Ransom.

It is now time to consider the life and achievements of Dr. Middleton Goldsmith, the third founder of the Society and the donor of this series of lectures, in the briefest possible way. Reference to the articles by Peters,<sup>3</sup> Wood<sup>4</sup> and most recently, Frantz<sup>5</sup> would indicate that the earlier of the two peripatetic physicians we are especially honoring tonight, Dr. Middleton Goldsmith, was born in Maryland in 1818, the son of Dr. Alban Middleton Smith whose name was later changed to Goldsmith. He spent his boyhood in Virginia and Kentucky, attended college in Indiana, and graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City in 1840. He sailed as a ship's surgeon to China and India, and returned to New York in time to found the New

York Pathological Society in conjunction with Drs. Peters and Sayre in June, 1844.<sup>6</sup> Later, he served as Professor of Surgery at the Castleton Medical College in Vermont, and resigned to take the Chair of Surgery, which had been occupied by his father, in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1857. If we need other data to establish Dr. Goldsmith as a true peripatetic, we can add that he served as Surgeon in the (Union) Army of the Cumberland, returned to Louisville and then to Rutland, Vermont, in about 1867 when his pro-Union sentiments made him "non grata" in Louisville. The last twenty years of his peregrinations seem to have been limited to a very active practice in the nearby countryside and an enthusiastic pursuit of fish and game. While at Rutland, he was instrumental in effecting the incorporation of the New York Pathological Society in 1886 and he was the donor of the series of lectures of which this is the twenty-first. Dr. Goldsmith died the following year and left a library of 1200 volumes to The New York Academy of Medicine. So we see that this peripatetic founder of our Society was an important donor to the Academy.

In my introduction of the second peripatetic philosopher I am following in large part the article by Dr. Peyton Rous in the July, 1942, Opie Number of the Archives of Pathology.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Opie was born in Virginia but grew up in Maryland. His father, Dr. Thomas Opie, was one of the founders, Dean and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Baltimore. It is of more than passing interest that the fathers of the two peripatetic professors led such distinguished careers. Dr. Eugene L. Opie received his A.B. at Johns Hopkins and started his course at the medical school where his father was Dean, but transferred after one year to Johns Hopkins Medical School where he graduated in the first class. At Johns Hopkins, to quote from Dr. Rous, he "... gained teachers able to teach the art of discovery, and so swiftly did he learn his lesson that he uncovered facts of large medical import even before he graduated." His earliest publications were related to avian malaria and the histology of the islands of Langerhans of the pancreas, the latter perhaps especially epochal. The study of the enzymes of leukocytes led him into the wider fields of inflammation. He was in the Department of Pathology at his Alma Mater for six years and then became "one of the first group of members of The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, at the age of thirty-one." For part of this time he was also

visiting pathologist at the Presbyterian Hospital when that great institution was located at Park Avenue and 70th Street.

From 1910 to 1923, while still continuing his studies on tuberculosis, he was at Washington University, St. Louis, where he served as Professor of Pathology and for part of that time also as Dean of the Medical School. To keep you from getting the idea that these years were spent exclusively at St. Louis it must be added that it was during this period that he served with the Army in France and headed commissions on trench fever and pneumonia at several Army camps in the United States.

In 1923 he became the Director of the Henry Phipps Institute for the Study, Treatment and Prevention of Tuberculosis, and Professor of Pathology at the University of Pennsylvania.

He has been in New York City since 1932, except for important projects in Jamaica, B. W. I., and Peking, China. In New York he served as Professor of Pathology at the Cornell Medical College until he became Emeritus Professor in 1941 and went to the Rockefeller Institute only to return to Cornell when his successor went to the Second World War, and then back to The Institute. At Cornell his principal collaborators were Dr. Jules Freund in tuberculosis, Dr. Jacob Furth in experimental leukemia, and Dr. Lewis D. Stevenson in neuropathology, but these and many other studies enhanced rather than interfered with his administrative duties and the meticulous study of gross pathologic material. One of my most inspiring memories at Cornell is the way he used to, and still does, come into the students' laboratory and sit down and discuss the significance of a slide or two with a single student as if that student were the sole heir of the entire science of pathology. Dr. Opie's more recent contributions have included studies on the cellular changes in tumors of the liver induced by carcinogens and on osmosis within the cytoplasm of cells. The number of Dr. Opie's communications has been enormous, but a study of any one of them would demonstrate the unique forcefulness and lucidity of the author.

But in a very real sense we are not here to review a list of achievements, even such an outstanding one, but rather to recognize the freshness and vigor of a scientist still in his intellectual prime. I am introducing not only an inheritor of the great tradition of William Henry Welch, himself a pupil of Julius Cohnheim, but a man with ever young enthusiasm, hoping he will lead some of us, chronologically his juniors, to renewed endeavor.

## REFERENCES

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*Pathogenesis, Cellular Pathology and the Nomenclature of Disease  
Illustrated by the Hepatic Necrosis, Lipidosis and Cirrhosis  
that Are Caused by Protein Diet Deficiency*

*The Twenty-First Middleton Goldsmith Lecture\**

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I AM greatly honored by the Trustees of the New York Pathological Society who have invited me to give a Middleton Goldsmith Lecture, named in memory of one of those who a hundred and ten years ago founded this Society. The information that Middleton Goldsmith in his early youth acted for a time as an assistant of Audubon in his study of birds is in accord with his later scholarly career as an eminent military surgeon, a teacher of surgery and finally, on his Vermont farm, an enthusiastic student of nature.

The conventional definition of pathology is the science of disease, the sum of scientific knowledge concerning disease, its origin, its nature, its various physiologic and anatomic features and its causative relations, that is, I may add, the total of all scientific medicine. German medical

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